



Department of Veterans Affairs

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program

COMPANION GUIDE: June 2016 Community Planning Update Survey

The following companion guide provides 1) an overview of how to complete the June 2016 survey, and 2) detailed descriptions of each survey question. Guidance for how to complete each survey item is also included.

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

Survey Purpose: The revised SSVF Community Planning Survey aims to provide a more in-depth picture of the factors involved in each individual community where an SSVF grantee provides services. It builds on the previous community planning tool's efforts by fostering a discussion with community partners on the status of their community, while allowing for the progress of the community to be analyzed by the SSVF Program Office. This analysis can lead to further efforts in establishing Technical Assistance with the specific communities based upon their stated needs. Please note this survey may not necessarily be considered your community's plan; it is an effort to collect community progress data in a standardized, survey format.

Survey Goals:

- Obtain an update on community planning efforts including clarifying the roles of HUD-VASH and GPD;
- Assess the potential use of bridge housing/change of scope for GPD;
- Assess data sharing capabilities and need for assistance;
- Determine the top priorities for planning efforts in each community;
- Determine which communities intend submit an ending Veteran Homelessness claim to federal partners (USICH, HUD, VA);
- Determine barriers to plan submission (training needs);
- Assess general technical assistance needs;
- Assess sustainability efforts/gaps in resources.

How to submit: Similar to the previous survey the SSVF Program Office can only accept **one** survey submission per CoC (see exceptions below). As a result, grantees must coordinate who will submit the survey for each community in their service area. **Do not access the survey link below unless you are designated to complete the survey and are ready to submit your answers.** The SSVF Program Office has prepared several materials to assist with this process: 1) this Companion Guide, 2) a PDF version of the SurveyMonkey questions, and 3) a blank survey document to help you document your answers prior to completing the survey.

As with previous submissions, grantees must coordinate with their homeless service providers, CoC, and local VA Medical Center(s) to ensure survey answers are consistent with community planning efforts. Survey submissions should reflect the community's efforts and needs. All community and VA stakeholders are responsible for ensuring information provided is accurate.

Exceptions for Balance of State CoCs and CoC CA-600: Grantees serving Balance of State CoCs may submit multiple survey submissions. The survey now provides space for BoS submissions to designate the counties covered by their corresponding survey responses. Additionally, grantees serving the Los Angeles City/County CoC (CA-600) may submit a community plan for each SPA region. This survey now provides space for entering the SPA number that corresponds with each survey submission.

Accessing the Survey: The survey can be accessed using the following link:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SSVFCommPlan>. Please remember to select "done" to submit your response to the SSVF Program Office.

Survey Deadline: All survey responses must be submitted no later than **Friday, June 3rd, 2016**.

January Survey Responses: If you would like to review your responses from the January community planning survey, all surveys are available on the SSVF University website using the following link:
http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf/index.asp?page=/ssvf_university/community_coordination_and_plans.

SECTION 2: SURVEY QUESTIONS

The below section provides detailed information for each survey question including: question number, question content, response options for each question, and guidance for completing each survey question.

Part 1: Demographics

Survey Question Number:	1
Survey Question:	CoC Number and Name
Response Options:	CoC name/ID drop-down list
Guidance/Description:	If you are completing surveys for more than one CoC please ensure the CoC selected from the drop-down corresponds with the survey answers.

Survey Question Number:	2
Survey Question:	If you serve a Balance of State CoC, which counties is this update for?
Response Options:	Open text
Guidance/Description:	This section is only available for Balance of State submissions.

Survey Question Number:	3
Survey Question:	If you are submitting a plan for CA-600, what is the SPA number associated with your update?
Response Options:	Open text
Guidance/Description:	This section is only available for CA-600 survey submissions. Please indicate the SPA number that corresponds with your survey answers.

Survey Question Number:	4
Survey Question:	Contact Information
Response Options:	Open text
Guidance/Description:	Please provide the contact information (name, organization, and email address) for the person submitting this survey.

Part 2: Coordination

Survey Question Number:	5
Survey Question:	Does your community have a written plan to end Veteran homelessness?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	A written community plan provides a comprehensive assessment of current needs, the community's definition of ending Veteran homelessness, strategies to reach this goal, and may include measurable data points/outcomes to assist with measuring progress towards goal achievement. <u>Please note- this survey (and all previous survey/template submissions) are not considered your community plan.</u>

Survey Question Number:	6
Survey Question:	If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, have community stakeholders (e.g. local VA Medical Center, SSVF grantees, etc.) provided input into the plan development and implementation?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if you selected "yes" for question #5.

Survey Question Number:	7
Survey Question:	CoC Point of Contact information
Response Options:	Open text
Guidance/Description:	Please provide information (name, organization, phone number, and email address) for the CoC point of contact.

Survey Question Number:	8
Survey Question:	Are representatives from the following VA funded programs present at community planning meetings/events?
Response Options:	Drop-down options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Not Applicable
Guidance/Description:	For each of the VA funded programs listed, please indicate whether a representative is present at 1) Strategic Planning/Coordination Meetings (note: big picture) and 2) Case Conferencing/Master List Meetings. For any programs not currently serving your community select “Not Applicable” for both meeting types. This question is designed to assess who is at the table when the community meets. Involvement of all key stakeholders and VA homeless programs ensures every community member is engaged and working towards the same plan.

Survey Question Number:	9
Survey Question:	What types of data are community providers able to share with their local VA Medical Center(s)?
Response Options:	Checkbox options (select all the apply): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client-level information (e.g. data from the HMIS system; includes identifying information such as the key elements for the by name/master list) • Aggregate performance information (e.g. housing placement numbers; length of time homeless, does not include identifying information)
Guidance/Description:	Data sharing is a major piece of community planning efforts. This question assesses what types of data the community (e.g. SSVF, CoC, street outreach, etc.) is able to share with their local VA Medical Center(s). Community planning data generally falls into two categories: identified (or client-level) and aggregate. Client-level data includes personally identifying information (PII) such as a client’s name, social security number, date of birth, etc. This data requires releases of information. Aggregate data contains no personally identifying information and can be disclosed without written authorization from clients. This data is usually used to communicate performance/progress (e.g. total placements in permanent housing).

Survey Question Number:	10
Survey Question:	What types of data can local VA Medical Center staff share with community providers?
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client-level information (e.g. data from the HOMES system such as key elements for the by name/master list) • Aggregate performance information (e.g. HUD-VASH placement numbers; length of time homeless, GPD information, does not include identifying information)
Guidance/Description:	<p>Data sharing is a major piece of community planning efforts. This question assesses what types of data local VA Medical Centers are able to share with their community providers (note: this question is different from #9). Community planning data generally falls into two categories: identified (or client-level) and aggregate.</p> <p>Aggregate data contains no personally identifying information. This data is usually used to communicate performance/progress (e.g. average time to move-in for HUD-VASH).</p> <p>Client-level data includes personally identifying information such as a client's name, social security number, date of birth, etc. While this data typically requires releases of information, the VHA's Privacy Office has issued guidance to VISNs/VAMCs regarding when VA can disclose protected information to outside community providers without a Release of Information in place. For more information please discuss with your SSVF Regional Coordinator.</p>

Survey Question Number:	11
Survey Question:	Does your community have a standardized Release of Information (ROI) form for data sharing between the local VA Medical Center(s) and other relevant stakeholders?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	<p>Data sharing is a major piece of community planning efforts. Releases of Information (ROIs) are required to ensure secure communication of client-level information across agencies/providers. Please indicate whether your community has ROIs in place to share data between providers and the VAMC(s).</p> <p>Please note the VHA's Privacy Office, in collaboration with VHA's Homeless Program Office and Office of General Council, has issued guidance to VISNs/VAMCs regarding when VA can disclose protected information to outside community providers without an ROI in place. For more information please discuss with your SSVF Regional Coordinator.</p>

Survey Question Number:	12
Survey Question:	If VA and non-VA homeless assistance providers are not able to share/receive data, which of the following would be helpful?
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the HUD/VA Guidance on data sharing and HMIS. • Sample ROIs and MOUs that other communities have used. • Training related to security/privacy and the ability to share data with an outside source that is not the VA (e.g. transmission of PII over VA networks/systems). • Assistance getting buy-in from the local VA Medical Center(s) to share data. • Assistance getting buy-in from other homeless assistance providers to share data.
Guidance/Description:	Please indicate any assistance required with data sharing in your community. Responses to this question will be used to guide training and technical assistance priorities on a regional and national level.

Survey Question Number:	13
Survey Question:	Is there a community-wide coordinated entry/assessment process for Veterans?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	This question has been modified from the previous community planning survey. Select “yes” if your community has a coordinated entry or assessment system in place to identify homeless Veterans and connect them with services. Note: this question is only asking if the community has a coordinated entry system for Veterans (not necessarily for all homeless individuals).

Survey Question Number:	14
Survey Question:	Who is lead point of contact for coordinated entry?
Response Options:	Open text
Guidance/Description:	Please provide the contact information (name, organization, organization type, phone number, and email address) for the lead point of contact for coordinated entry.

Survey Question Number:	15
Survey Question:	Is the HUD-VASH program integrated into coordinated entry?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please indicate whether HUD-VASH is integrated into your coordinated entry/assessment process. This integration may look different depending on the community (please refer to question #16).

Survey Question Number:	16
Survey Question:	If the answer was "Yes" to the previous question, please select the response that best describes this integration:
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community’s assessment is used for all Veterans, regardless of point of entry to determine need. • HUD-VASH receives all referrals from coordinated entry. • HUD-VASH receives referrals from coordinated entry but also allows for direct entry into their program through other means.
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if you selected “yes” to question # 15. Select the description that most accurately reflects how HUD-VASH is integrated into your coordinated entry system (e.g. do all referrals come from coordinated entry, or can VASH also receive referrals from other sources?).

Survey Question Number:	17
Survey Question:	Is GPD integrated into coordinated entry?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please indicate whether GPD is integrated into your coordinated entry/assessment process. This integration may look different depending on the community (please refer to question #18).

Survey Question Number:	18
Survey Question:	If the answer was "Yes" to the previous question, please select the response that best describes this integration:
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community's assessment is used for all Veterans, regardless of point of entry to determine need. • GPD receives all referrals from coordinated entry. • GPD receives only bridge housing referrals from coordinated entry. • GPD receives referrals from coordinated entry but also allows for direct entry into their program through other means.
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if you selected "yes" to question # 17. Select the description that most accurately reflects how GPD is integrated into your coordinated entry system (e.g. do all referrals come from coordinated entry, or can GPD also receive referrals from other sources?).

For the following GPD-related questions: Bridge Housing is transitional housing used as a short-term stay when a Veteran has been offered and accepted a permanent housing intervention (e.g., Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH), Housing Coalition/Continuum of Care (CoC) resources), but access to the permanent housing is still being arranged. Bridge Housing is generally provided for up to 90 days. Goals in the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Individual Service Plan (ISP) should be very short-term with the focus on the move to permanent housing.

Survey Question Number:	19
Survey Question:	Is GPD providing bridge housing in the community?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • N/A
Guidance/Description:	GPD providers wishing to offer bridge housing (<i>please see definition above</i>) must submit a change of scope request to the GPD Program Office. Please note: in order to answer "yes" to this question a GPD provider(s) must have either a) had a change of scope approved by the GPD Program Office, or b) be in the process of submitting a change of scope request.

Survey Question Number:	20
Survey Question:	Please list the GPD providers currently serving your community.
Response Options:	Open text (please separate each provider name with a comma)
Guidance/Description:	Please list all GPD providers (name and bed number) serving your community. Providers listed should be geographically located within your community.

Survey Question Number:	21
Survey Question:	Have any GPD providers in your community submitted a change of scope to the GPD Program Office?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Open Text (if answer is “yes”)
Guidance/Description:	Select “yes” if any GPD providers in your community have submitted a change of scope request to the GPD Program Office. Please also list the names of any GPD providers that have submitted a change a scope.

Survey Question Number:	22
Survey Question:	If "No" to question 21, are any GPD providers planning to submit a change of scope?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Open Text (if answer is “yes”)
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if the answer to question # 21 was “no”. Please indicate if any GPD providers are planning to submit a change of scope request to the GPD Program Office. Please also list the names of any GPD providers that plan to submit a change a scope.

Part 3: Master List

A community must have an active list (commonly referred to as a “by-name” list or “master list”) that identifies all homeless Veterans, including those who are in unsheltered and as well as in sheltered locations (i.e., transitional housing, emergency shelter and safe haven). The community must be able to demonstrate the list is updated or refreshed at least monthly. The list may be populated by other data sources, such as HOMES, HMIS, or other comparable databases. This list is also updated at least monthly to reflect accurate status if verification shows that a person on the active list is not a Veteran. It should include the elements required for the Benchmarks and Specifications if the community is pursuing the federal criteria claim process. (Source: Achieving the Goal of Ending Veteran Homelessness: Criteria and Benchmarks, December 3, 2015)

Survey Question Number:	23
Survey Question:	Does the community have a master list?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Answer “yes” if your community has a master or by-name list. Please refer to the definition above for more information on master lists.

Survey Question Number:	24
Survey Question:	If "Yes" to the previous question, is the list one complete document (not multiple parts)?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if you selected “yes” to question # 23.

Survey Question Number:	25
Survey Question:	Who manages the master list?
Response Options:	Open text
Guidance/Description:	Please provide the contact information (name, role, organization, and organization type).

Survey Question Number:	26
Survey Question:	Does your list have the following elements?
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes all unsheltered Veterans • Includes all Veterans in emergency shelter (regardless of shelter funding source) • Includes all Veterans in transitional housing (GPD, community TH, regardless of funding source)
Guidance/Description:	If your community has a master list, please indicate what elements are captured on the list (select all that apply).

Survey Question Number:	27
Survey Question:	How often do you meet to review and update the master list?
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times a week • Weekly • Bi-weekly • Monthly • Bi-Monthly • Quarterly
Guidance/Description:	If your community has a master list, select how frequently your community meets to review and update the list. Master lists are living documents that must routinely be reviewed and revised to accurately capture all Veterans experiencing homelessness in your community.

Survey Question Number:	28
Survey Question:	Currently what are your community's top 3 priorities for ending Veteran homelessness?
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By Name List development • Increase use of SSVF rapid re-housing to close gaps. • Sustainability: Developing written policies and procedures to maintain the master list and case conference processes • Sustainability: Ensuring that at least 1 party (most likely the CoC) is responsible for maintaining the goal of ending Veteran homelessness and codifying this into CoC governance structure • Sustainability: Evaluating data on a regular basis to track any new trends, make modifications, and assess sustainability • Data sharing • CoC engagement in planning efforts • VAMC engagement in planning efforts • Submitting a claim to the federal partners (USICH/HUD/VA) • Establishing a coordinated intake/entry system. • Designing the system to meet federal benchmark criteria. • Establishing regular meetings to review and update the BNL/Master List. • Establishing regular meetings to strategize system improvements/enhancements. • GPD change of scope. • Integrating GPD clients into the BNL/Master List. • Increasing permanent housing options (e.g. landlord engagement, etc.) • Prioritizing clients for HUD-VASH vouchers
Guidance/Description:	Please indicate what your community's top 3 priorities are for community planning. Please select no more than 3 options for the list above. This question will help the SSVF Program Office gauge priorities on a national and community level and identify potential training/technical assistance opportunities.

Part 4: Meetings and Strategy

Survey Question Number:	29
Survey Question:	What types of meetings does your community have?
Response Options:	<p>Case Conferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly • Bi-Weekly • Monthly • Quarterly • No meetings occur <p>Strategic Planning/Coordination Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly • Bi-Weekly • Monthly • Quarterly • No meetings occur
Guidance/Description:	Indicate how frequently your community meets to do a) case conferencing and b) strategic planning/coordination meetings. Case conferencing meetings involve reviewing and revising the master list and troubleshooting barriers for specific clients. Strategic meetings are more “big picture” and involve discussions of larger community planning goals and sustainability.

Survey Question Number:	30
Survey Question:	When are your next three strategic planning/coordination meetings?
Response Options:	Date/Time
Guidance/Description:	List your community’s next 3 strategic planning/coordination meeting dates and times.

Survey Question Number:	31
Survey Question:	Would you like your SSVF Regional Coordinator and/or TA representative to participate in one of these meetings?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Open Text (if answer is “yes”)
Guidance/Description:	Indicate if you would like your SSVF Regional Coordinator and/or a technical assistance representative to attend. Please provide the dial-in information for the upcoming meetings.

Part 5: Federal Criteria/Benchmarks and Support

Survey Question Number:	32
Survey Question:	Has your community decided to pursue the federal partners' process?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please select "yes" if your community is planning to pursue the federal partners' process (benchmarks/criteria). The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Veterans Affairs have adopted a vision of what it means to end all homelessness and specific criteria and benchmarks for ending Veteran homelessness in order to help guide communities as they take action to achieve the goal. Together, these criteria and benchmarks are intended to help to define the vision of ending Veteran homelessness within communities and to help align local efforts in support of that vision, with a focus on long-term, lasting solutions.

Survey Question Number:	33
Survey Question:	If the answer to the previous question was "No", why have you decided not to pursue the process?
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not feel we can meet the criteria/benchmarks. • Our CoC is not interested in pursuing the process. • We are interested in pursuing the federal process but are unsure of the requirements, and training/TA needed.
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if you selected "no" for question #32. Please select the answer that best describes why your community has decided not to pursue the federal partners' process.

Survey Question Number:	34
Survey Question:	Has your community submitted a claim to the federal partners (USICH, VA, HUD)?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Select "yes" if your community has submitted a claim to the federal partners.

Survey Question Number:	35
Survey Question:	If the answer to Question 34 was "Yes", please provide the date the claim was submitted and its current status (pending, approved, denied).
Response Options:	Open text
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if your selected "yes" not question #34. Also indicate when the claim was submitted and what the status of the claim is: approved, denied, or pending.

Survey Question Number:	36
Survey Question:	List any technical assistance needs. (Select all that apply.)
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with by name list • Assistance with data sharing between VA and community and/or data tracking. • Assistance with understanding the federal criteria and benchmarks • Assistance with sustainability planning • Assistance with integration and coordination of HUD-VASH, GPD, and/or other transitional housing • Assistance with CoC/stakeholder engagement
Guidance/Description:	Please select any technical assistance needs from the options above (select all that apply).

Part 6: Sustainability

In this section you will be asked to identify any sustainability issues identified during your planning efforts. Note: all communities should respond to these questions.

Survey Question Number:	37
Survey Question:	Has your community begun sustainability planning efforts?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please indicate whether or not your community has begun sustainability planning. Sustainability planning involves reviewing the resources available in your community (including renewal and one-time funding), identifying any gaps/needs, and ensuring processes are in place to serve homeless Veterans and prevent reoccurrences of homelessness.

Survey Question Number:	38
Survey Question:	What resource gaps (if any) have you identified that may hinder sustainability? Select all that apply
Response Options:	<p>Checkbox options (select all the apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for additional prevention/rapid-rehousing funds (non-SSVF) • Need for SSVF Rapid Rehousing Waiver to serve higher proportion of homelessness prevention households in SSVF • Need for additional HUD-VASH vouchers • Need for additional Section 8 (non-VA) housing vouchers • Need for additional VA funded prevention/rapid re-housing (SSVF) • Need for income support / financial management services (e.g. Rep Payee) • Need for additional permanent supportive housing resources (VA and/or non-VA) • Need for affordable, permanent housing options • Funding for other intensive case management services for RRH Veterans currently housed but at-risk of returning to homelessness. • No resource gaps have been identified at this time. • Unknown - sustainability planning has not yet begun for this community. • Other (open text)
Guidance/Description:	Select any resource gaps identified by your community that would impact sustainability. Select all that apply.

Survey Question Number:	39
Survey Question:	Does your community currently have Priority 1 (aka "Surge") SSVF funding?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please select "yes" if your community has Priority 1 SSVF (or Surge) funding. Priority 1 funding is 3-year, non-renewable SSVF funding.

Survey Question Number:	40
Survey Question:	If the answer to the previous question is "yes", does your community have adequate funding resources in place to sustain your system when "surge" funding ends?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Open text – if answer is "no"
Guidance/Description:	Please answer this question only if question #39 is "yes". Indicate whether or not adequate funding is in place to sustain services to homeless Veterans when Priority 1 funding ends. If the answer is "no", please describe what gaps will exist.

Survey Question Number:	41
Survey Question:	Does your community regularly follow-up with rapid re-housing clients to ensure housing stabilization?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No
Guidance/Description:	Please indicate if your community routinely follows-up with Veterans in rapid re-housing to avoid recidivism to literal homelessness. Does your community work to ensure housing stabilization for rapid re-housing clients?

Survey Question Number:	42
Survey Question:	Do you have a system in place to ensure rapid re-housing clients experiencing new housing crises are routed to prevention/other stabilization services?
Response Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Open text – if answer is “yes”
Guidance/Description:	Please indicate if your community has processes to place to route clients at risk of homeless reoccurrence to prevention/other stabilization services. If the answer is “yes”, please briefly describe this process.